

As valiant an effort as the localism is, the benefits of repeaters placed with local stations serves us quite well and allows us to be a part of a larger network while getting the benefits of a local station. Let me explain:

We are in a region of about 1 million people. I travel east in the state to the coast through huge expanses (by eastern standards!) of sparsely inhabited countryside, yet I can listen to one of three listener supported stations for a great part of the distance. I have to change the station several times, but the same content is there, so I can listen to music, news, commentary, or a talk show without interruption.

The stations involved are K-LOVE, a national Christian music and news network. Along with the national programming, I get local news, weather, and community happenings (concert info, summer programs for children, etc.). The second is called His Radio, and there are probably 5 different buttons on my radio for this. Several are AM, several FM. I'm not even sure where the towns are that I listen through, but it's easy to switch between them. It's based in Durham (I think), but I know people in other states who also get the same content at the same time. The third is WCPE, a classical-only station that has several other frequencies, as well as internet streaming and satellite broadcast.

The main point is that these areas do not have the personnel to do extensive on air work, for the most part. Having a translator in a network allows listeners in outlying areas to benefit from a broader array of material, content that would probably not be available were it not for the translator network.

LowPower FM sounds like a great addition for places where there are folks wanting to be broadcasters. But I fear it will be a disservice to the people in smaller, more rural areas who will suffer if these stations (with shorter hours and less developed or full content) replace the larger networks being translated and localised through affiliate stations as is the current setup.

Thanks for listening.